

MASTER OF
KUNG FU

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™



33
OCT
02449

THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI,

MASTER OF KUNG-FU



MECHANIZED *DEATH* vs. MARTIAL-ARTS *FURY!*
MESSENGER OF MADNESS!



"Call me Shang-Chi, as my father did, when he raised me and molded my mind and my body in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. My father forged my body into a living weapon through the discipline of kung fu. And he used that weapon to *kill*.

"Since then, I have learned that my father is Dr. Fu Manchu the most insidiously evil man on earth...and that to *honor* him would bring nothing but *dishonor* to the spirit of my name."

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **MASTER OF KUNG FU!**™

STYLISH KUNG FU
STORYTELLING AT ITS
BEST--GUTSY ACTION
WITH MYSTERY, MOOD
AND SOUL. IT ALL
STARTS NOW--AND IT
DOESN'T STOP 'TIL
THE END. SO COME ON--!!

MOENCH, GULACY, & ADKINS,
STORY & ART

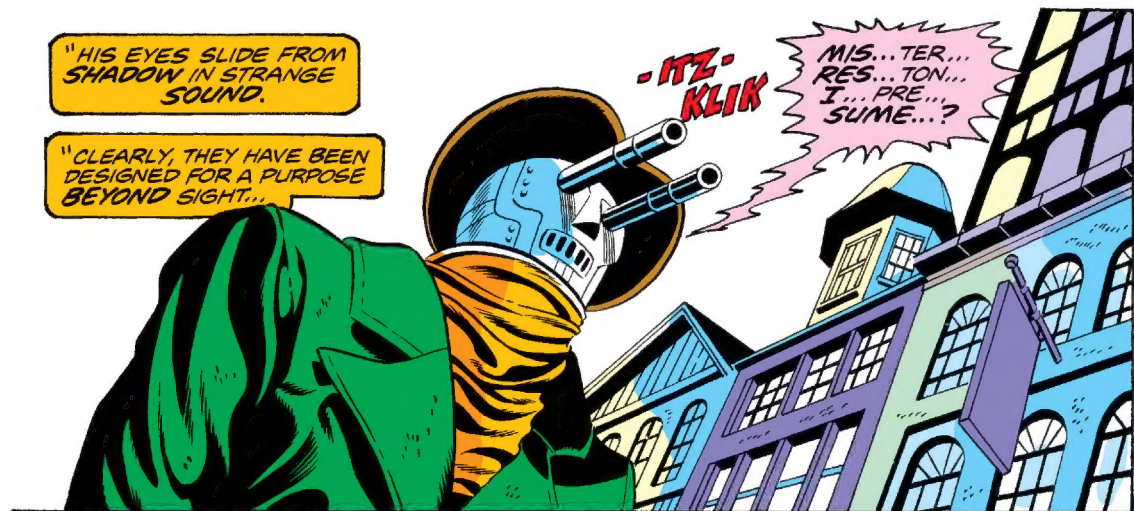
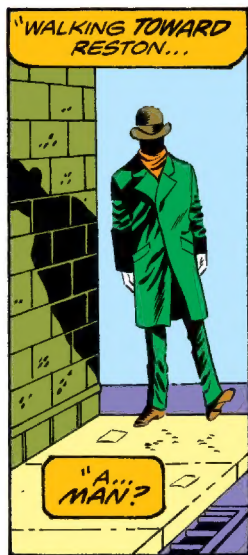
JOHN COSTANZA,
LETTERER

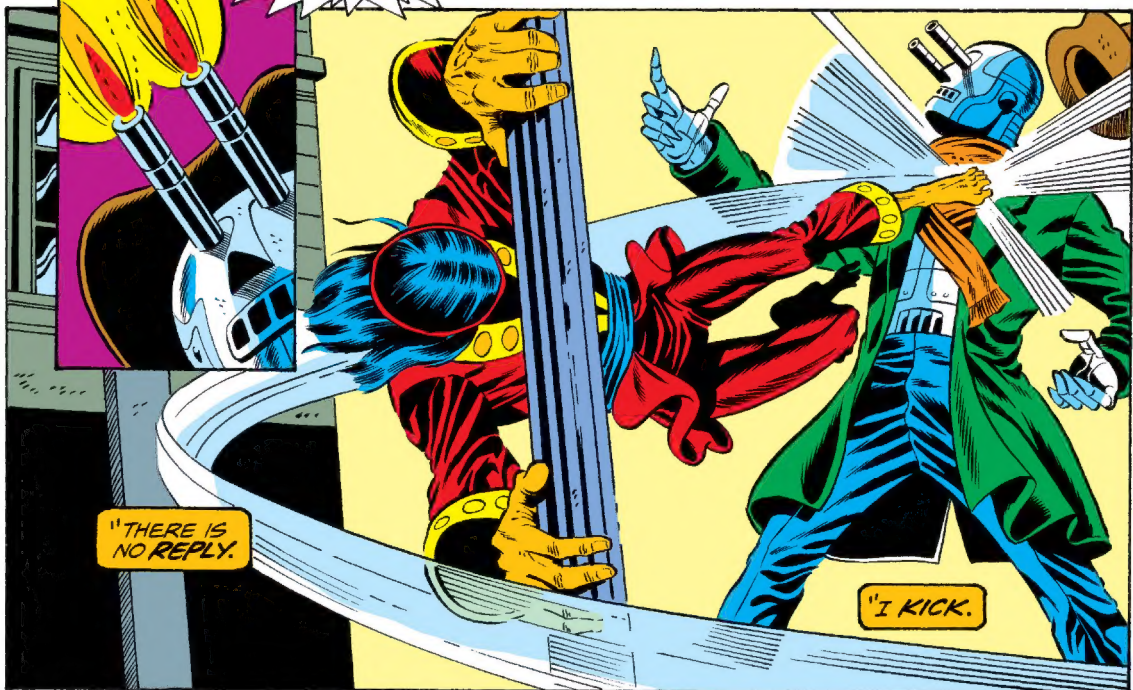
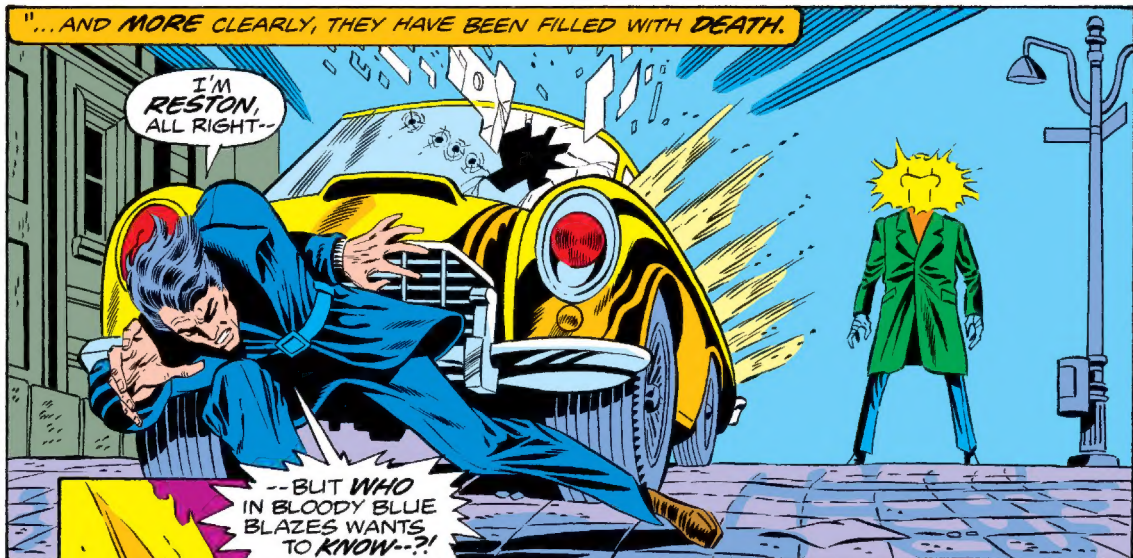
JANICE COHEN,
COLORIST

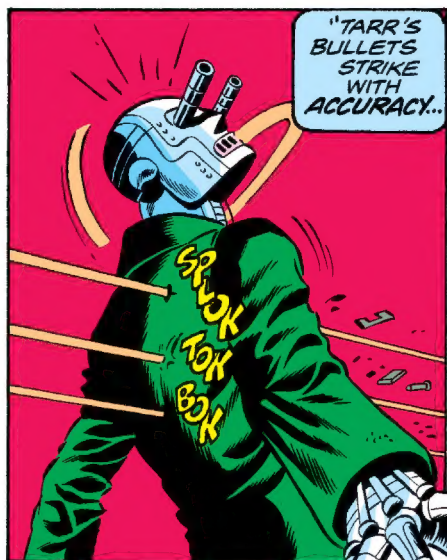
LEN WEIN,
EDITOR



FEATURING SUPPORTING CHARACTERS BY SAX ROHMER



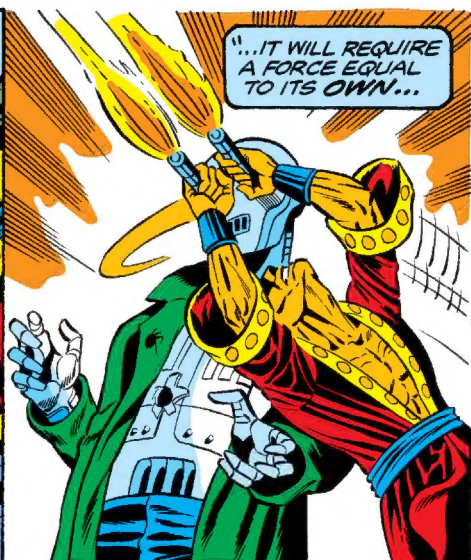




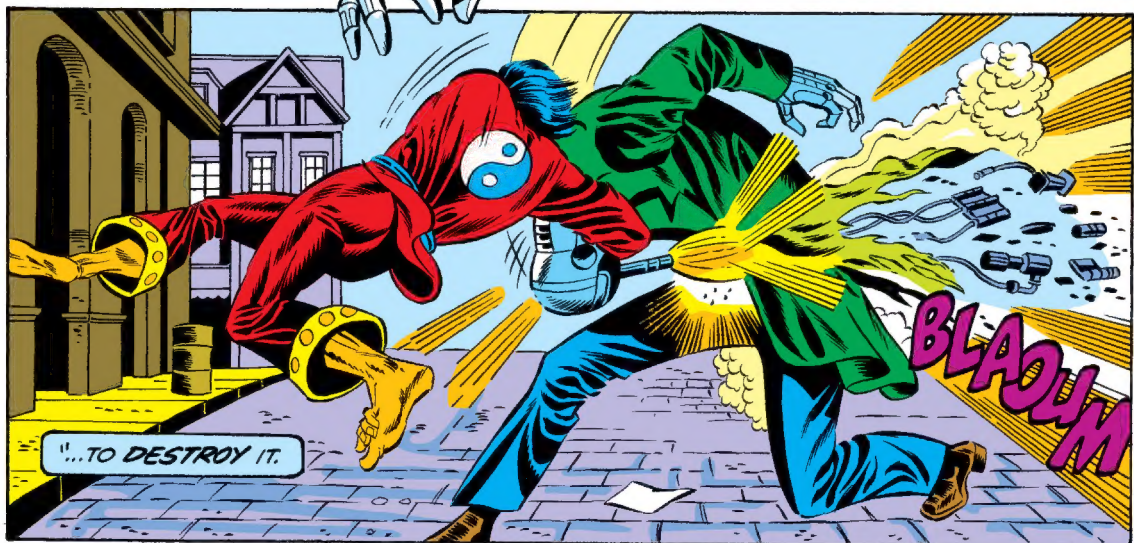
"TARR'S BULLETS STRIKE WITH ACCURACY..."



"...AND THOUGH THE THING HAS BEEN DISTRACTED..."

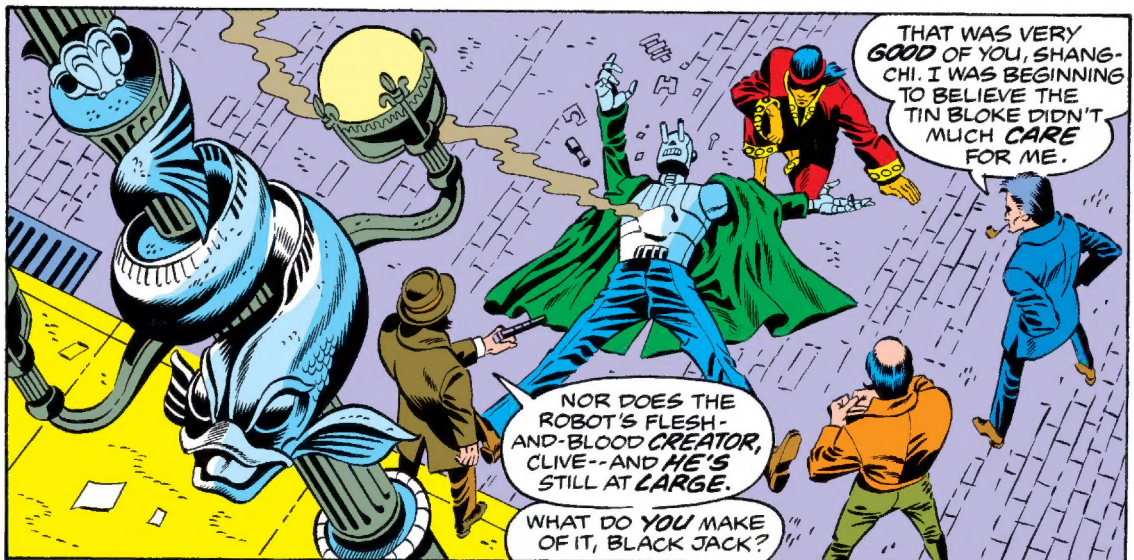


"...IT WILL REQUIRE A FORCE EQUAL TO ITS OWN..."



"...TO DESTROY IT."

BLAOW



THAT WAS VERY GOOD OF YOU, SHANG-CHI. I WAS BEGINNING TO BELIEVE THE TIN BLOKE DIDN'T MUCH CARE FOR ME.

NOR DOES THE ROBOT'S FLESH-AND-BLOOD CREATOR, CLIVE--AND HE'S STILL AT LARGE.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, BLACK JACK?

WELL, IF HE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD...

...I'D SAY THIS LOOKS LIKE ONE OF MORDILLO'S TOYS.

"MORDILLO?"

WHO IS MORDILLO?

A FREE AND MYSTERIOUSLY INDEPENDENT AGENT, SHANG-CHI--A RUTHLESSLY PROFESSIONAL ASSASSIN WHOSE ONLY PATRIOTISM IS DEVOTED TO MONEY.

BUT SINCE WE'VE NEVER RAISED HIS PRICE, HE IS MOST FREQUENTLY EMPLOYED BY THE REDS--CHINESE MORE OFTEN THAN SOVIETS. NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN HIM, BUT IT IS KNOWN THAT HE PERFORMS HIS WORK WITH GHOULISH ALACRITY...

...AND HIS METHODS DISPLAY A MACABRE AND ECCENTRIC SENSE OF HUMOR. HE IS FOND OF GADGETS-- LIKE THIS ROBOT, FOR EXAMPLE...

YES, IT COULD BE MORDILLO, AT THAT. MY FATHER TOLD ME HE WAS THE MOST BRILLIANTLY INSANE MAN HE'D EVER FACED...

BUT WHY WOULD MORDILLO WANT TO TAKE ME OUT? MY LAST ASSIGNMENT WAS THE VELCRO CAPER--AND THAT'S CERTAINLY BEEN WRAPPED UP. BESIDES, I'VE NEVER EVEN CROSSED PATHS WITH MORDILLO...

DON'T BE TOO CERTAIN, CLIVE. REMEMBER: NO ONE KNOWS WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE.

THAT'S TRUE. PERHAPS I HAVE CROSSED HIM WITHOUT KNOWING IT. IT'D MAKE FOR A VENGEANCE GAME, IF NOTHING ELSE...

NO SENSE IN WORRYING ABOUT IT NOW. BESIDES, YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME IF PETRIE MADE IT BACK SAFELY.

YES, HE'S WAITING FOR YOU AT HEAD-QUARTERS RIGHT NOW--WITH A NEW CASE, HE SAID.

VERY WELL. WHY DON'T YOU TAKE SHANG-CHI TO THE FLAT I'VE HAD PREPARED FOR HIS LONDON STAYS. BLACK JACK AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF THE METAL-MAN...

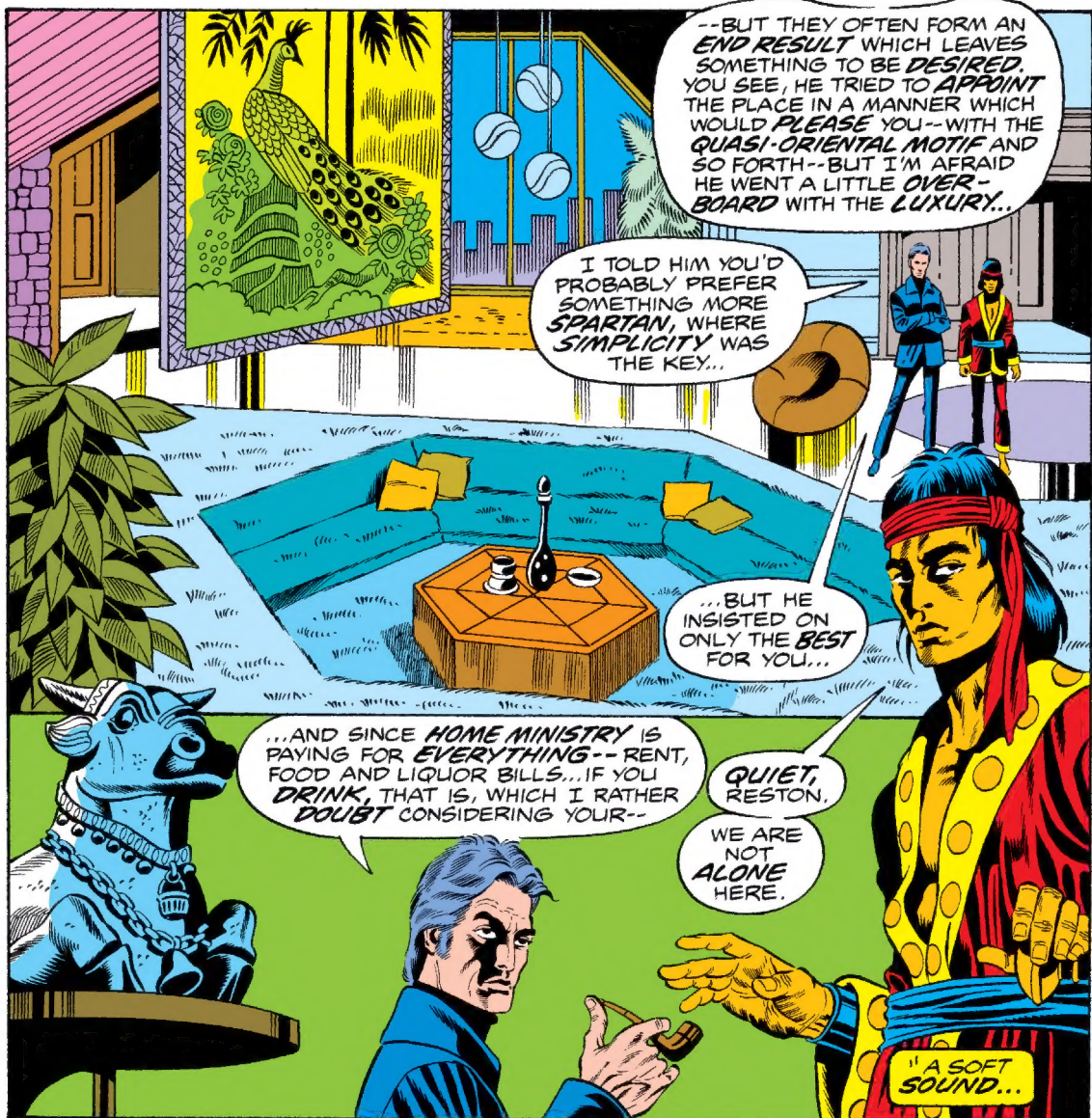
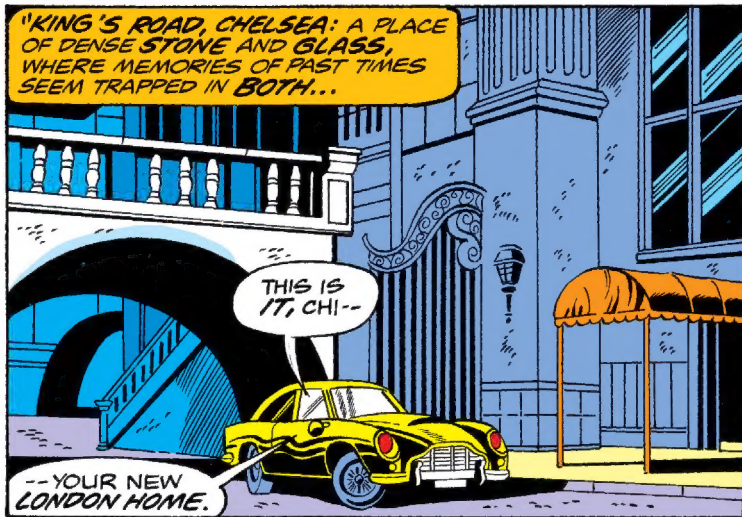
...AND IF IT IS ONE OF MORDILLO'S LITTLE TOYS, WE'D BEST DIG SOME OF THESE SHELLS OUT OF THE WALL AND HAVE THE LAB GO OVER THEM WITH A FINE-TOOTHED MICRO-SCOPE...

"AS I LEAVE WITH RESTON..."

SMITH SAID A... FLAT?

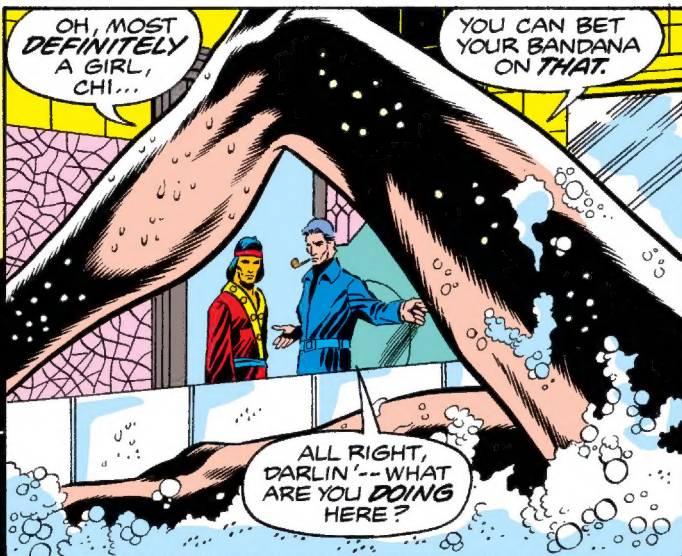
BRITISH SLANG FOR "LIVING QUARTERS," CHI...

YOU'LL SEE.





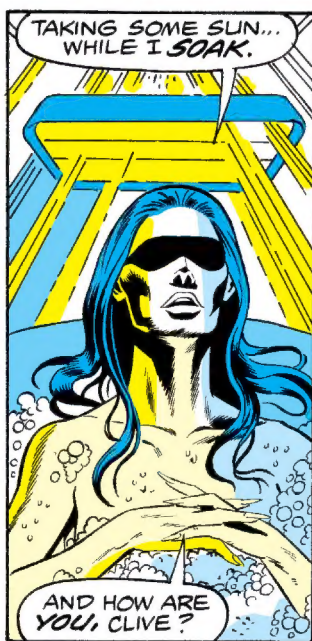
A GIRL--?



OH, MOST DEFINITELY A GIRL, CHI...

YOU CAN BET YOUR BANDANA ON THAT.

ALL RIGHT, DARLIN'-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



TAKING SOME SUN... WHILE I SOAK.

AND HOW ARE YOU, CLIVE?



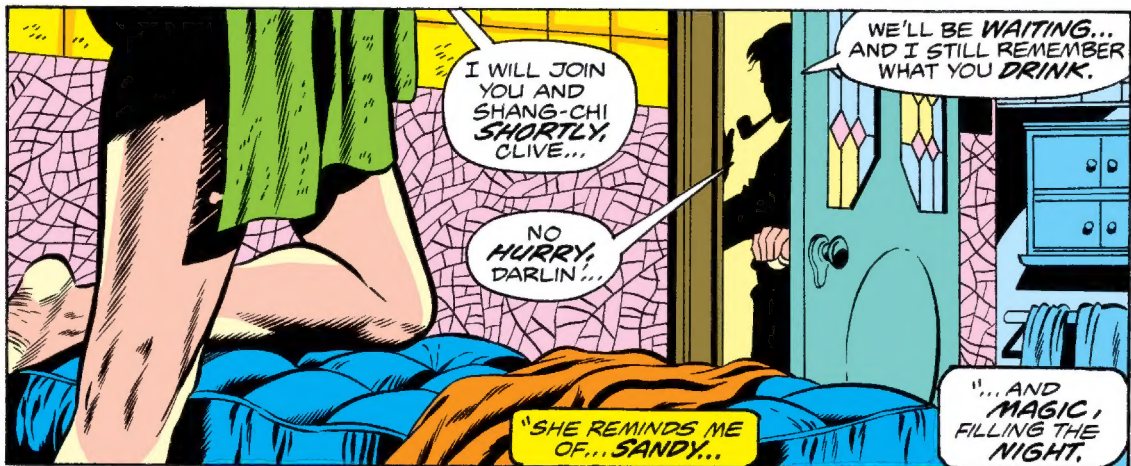
CAN'T COMPLAIN, LEIKO...



BUT WHY DON'T YOU OPEN YOUR EYES AND MEET A FRIEND...? SHANG-CHI, THIS IS LEIKO WU.

I HAVE HEARD A GREAT DEAL ABOUT YOU, SHANG-CHI.

WOULD YOU HAND ME THAT TOWEL, PLEASE...? I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE CAUSED A DRAFT.



I WILL JOIN YOU AND SHANG-CHI SHORTLY, CLIVE...

NO HURRY, DARLIN'...

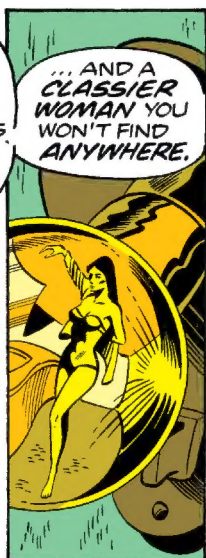
WE'LL BE WAITING... AND I STILL REMEMBER WHAT YOU DRINK.

...AND MAGIC, FILLING THE NIGHT.

SHE REMINDS ME OF... SANDY...



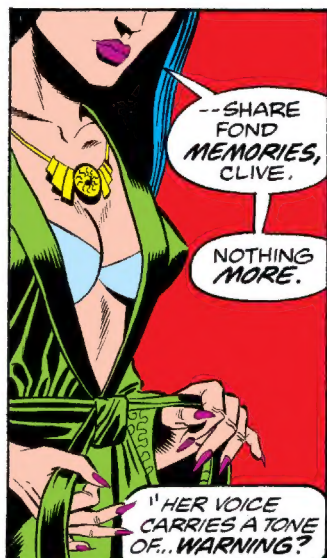
YOU'LL LIKE HER, CHI. LEIKO'S ONE OF THE BEST AGENTS SMITH'S GOT-- YOU AND I INCLUDED...



... AND A CLASSIER WOMAN YOU WON'T FIND ANYWHERE.



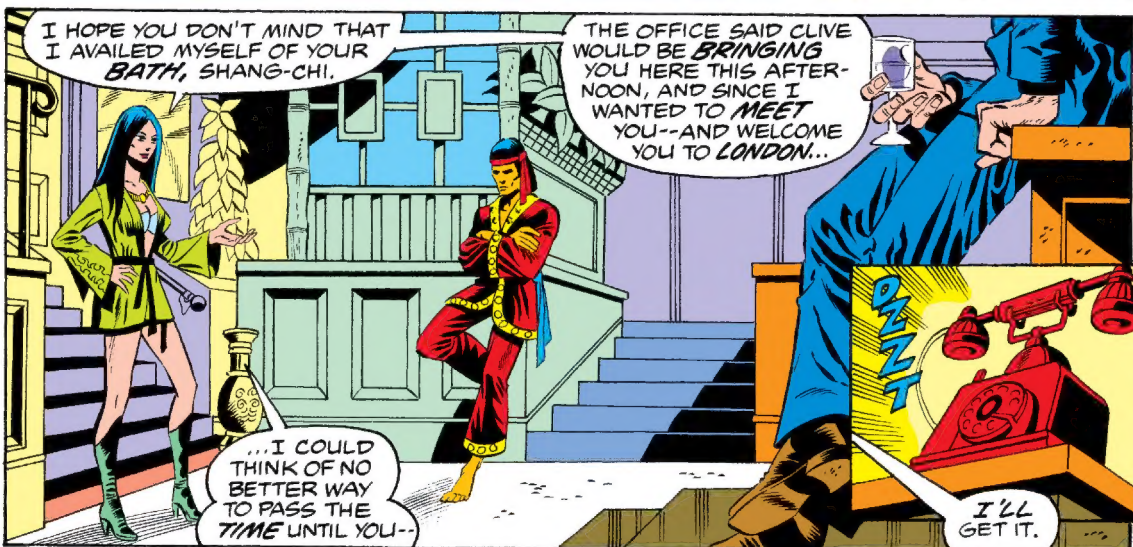
IN FACT, LEIKO AND I --



--SHARE FOND MEMORIES, CLIVE.

NOTHING MORE.

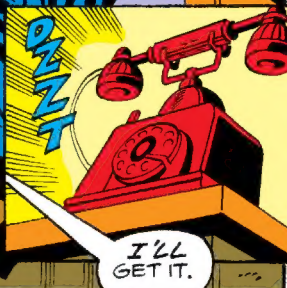
"HER VOICE CARRIES A TONE OF... WARNING?"



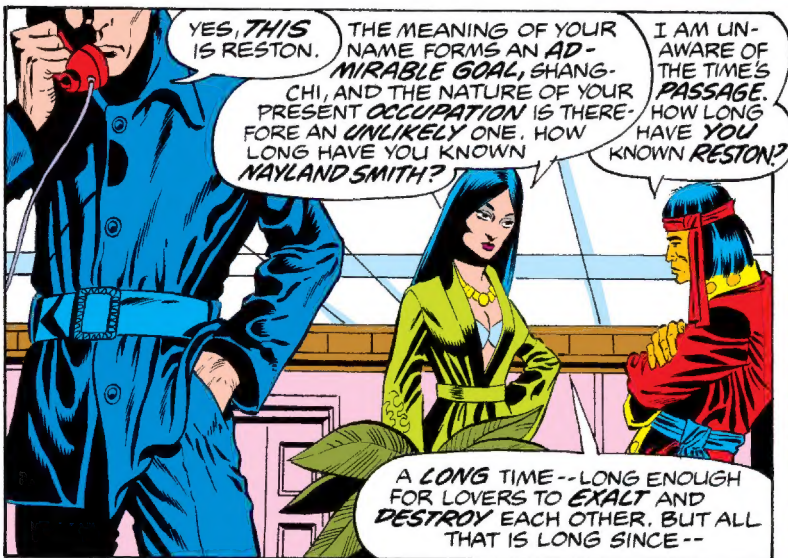
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND THAT I AVAILED MYSELF OF YOUR BATH, SHANG-CHI.

THE OFFICE SAID CLIVE WOULD BE BRINGING YOU HERE THIS AFTERNOON, AND SINCE I WANTED TO MEET YOU--AND WELCOME YOU TO LONDON...

...I COULD THINK OF NO BETTER WAY TO PASS THE TIME UNTIL YOU--



I'LL GET IT.



YES, THIS IS RESTON.

THE MEANING OF YOUR NAME FORMS AN ADMIRABLE GOAL, SHANG-CHI, AND THE NATURE OF YOUR PRESENT OCCUPATION IS THEREFORE AN UNLIKELY ONE. HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN NAYLAND SMITH?

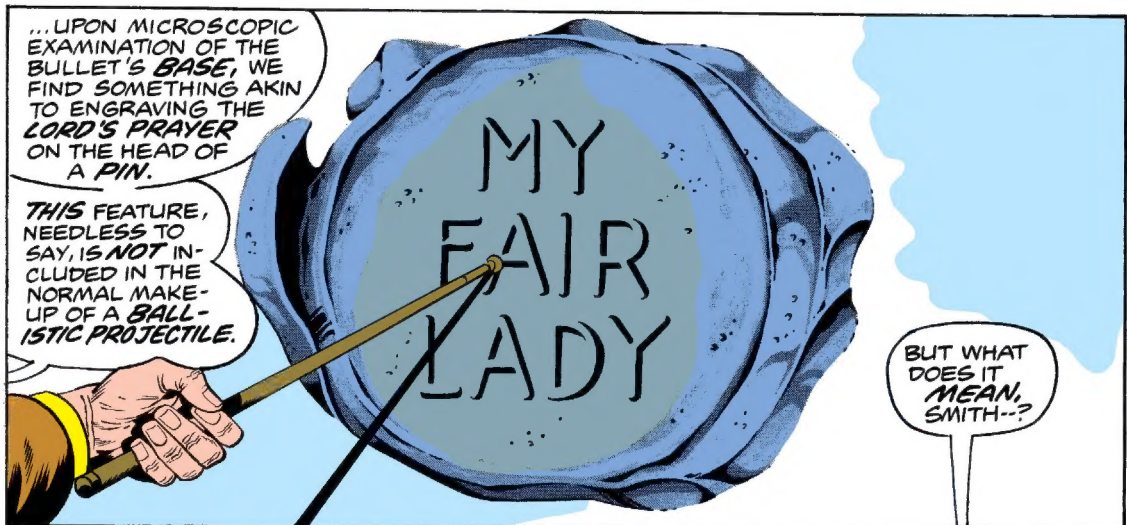
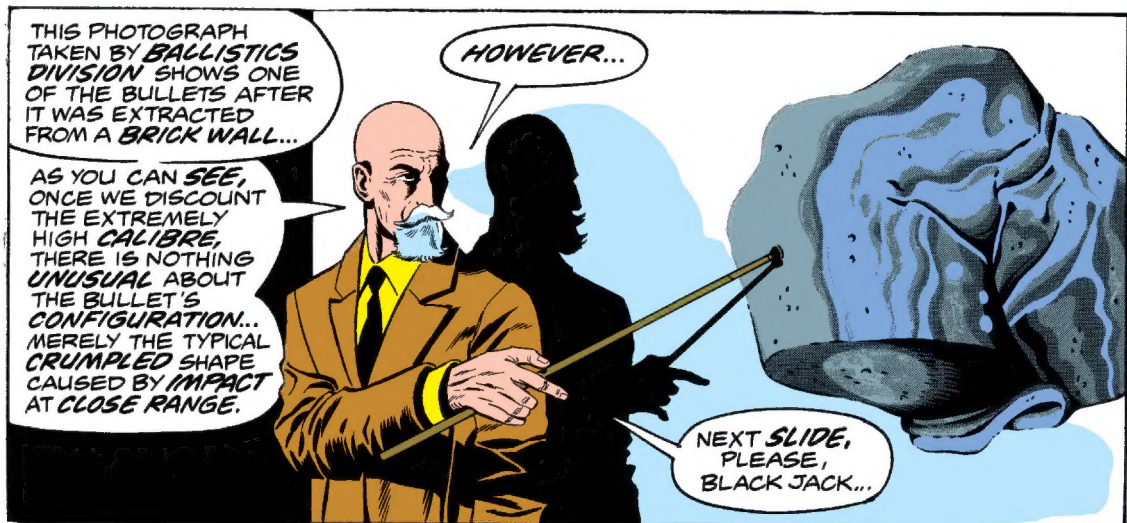
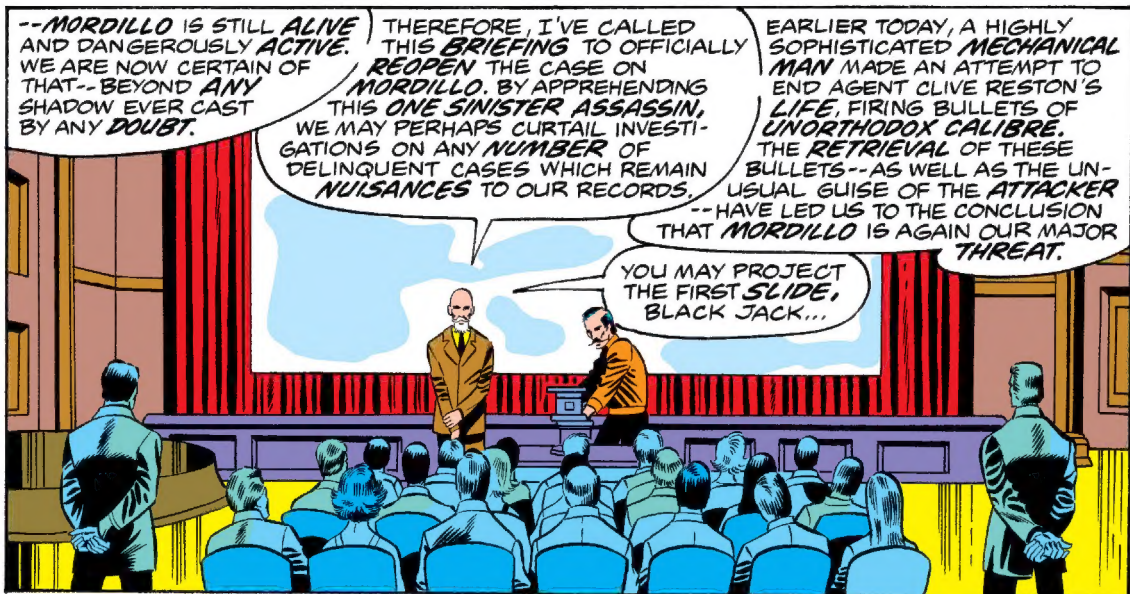
I AM UN-AWARE OF THE TIME'S PASSAGE. HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN RESTON?

A LONG TIME--LONG ENOUGH FOR LOVERS TO EXALT AND DESTROY EACH OTHER. BUT ALL THAT IS LONG SINCE--



PARTY'S OVER, I'M AFRAID.

SMITH WANTS ALL THREE OF US DOWN AT SCOTLAND YARD NOW. THEY'VE JUST LEARNED THAT--



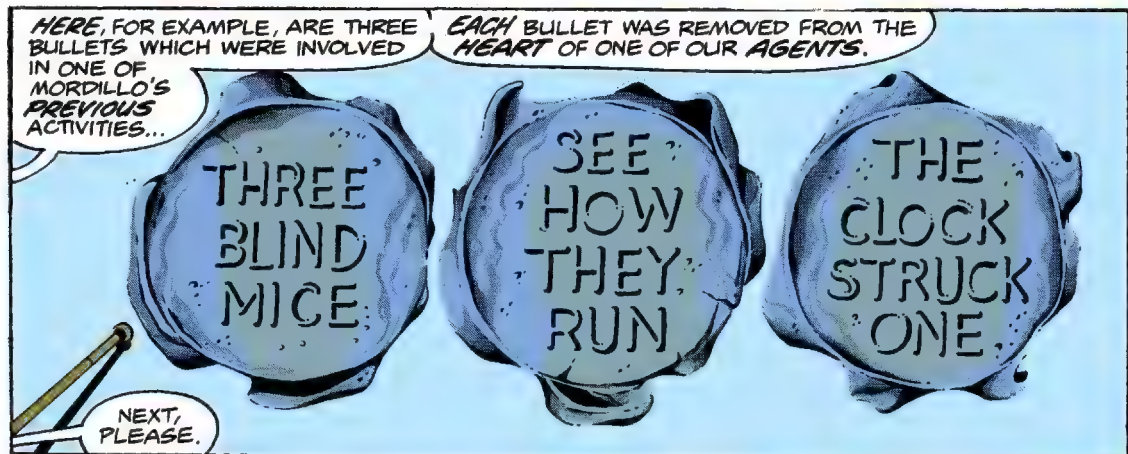


PERHAPS MORDILLO IS ADVERTISING THE REVIVAL OF A **MUSICAL SHOW**.

MORE LIKELY A COMMENT ON YOUR **MASCULINITY**, RESTON. THOSE SAME THREE WORDS WERE ENGRAVED ON **EVERY SHELL** WE DUG OUTTA THAT WALL-- AND THEY WERE ALL AIMED AT YOU.

LEVITY **ASIDE**, GENTLEMEN, THE MESSAGE IS OBVIOUSLY ANOTHER OF THE **CRYPTIC RIDDLES** FOR WHICH MORDILLO HAS DISPLAYED A FONDNESS IN THE PAST.

"LEIKO'S SCENT IS... PLEASANT, BUT **DISTRACTING**...



HERE, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE THREE BULLETS WHICH WERE INVOLVED IN ONE OF MORDILLO'S **PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES**...

EACH BULLET WAS REMOVED FROM THE **HEART** OF ONE OF OUR AGENTS.

THREE
BLIND
MICE

SEE
HOW
THEY
RUN

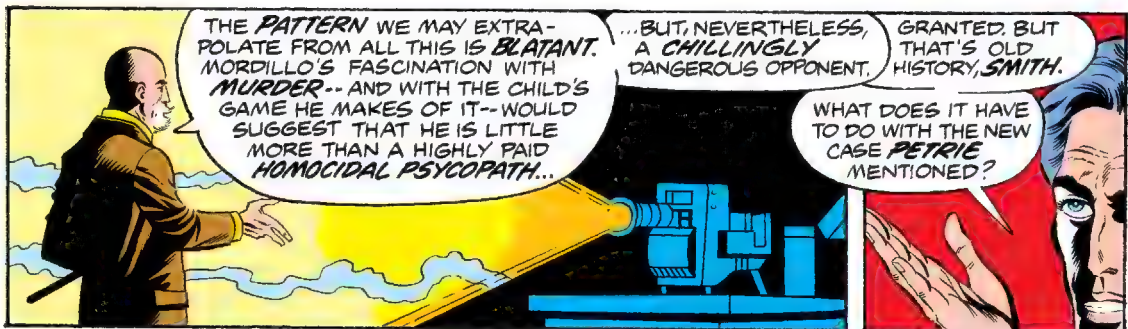
THE
CLOCK
STRUCK
ONE

NEXT,
PLEASE.



THE AGENTS WERE FOUND LYING AT THE FOOT OF **BIG BEN**... WITH THEIR **EYES** PLUCKED OUT.

THE CORONER ESTABLISHED THE TIME OF THEIR **DEATHS** TO HAVE BEEN APPROXIMATELY **ONE O'CLOCK**.

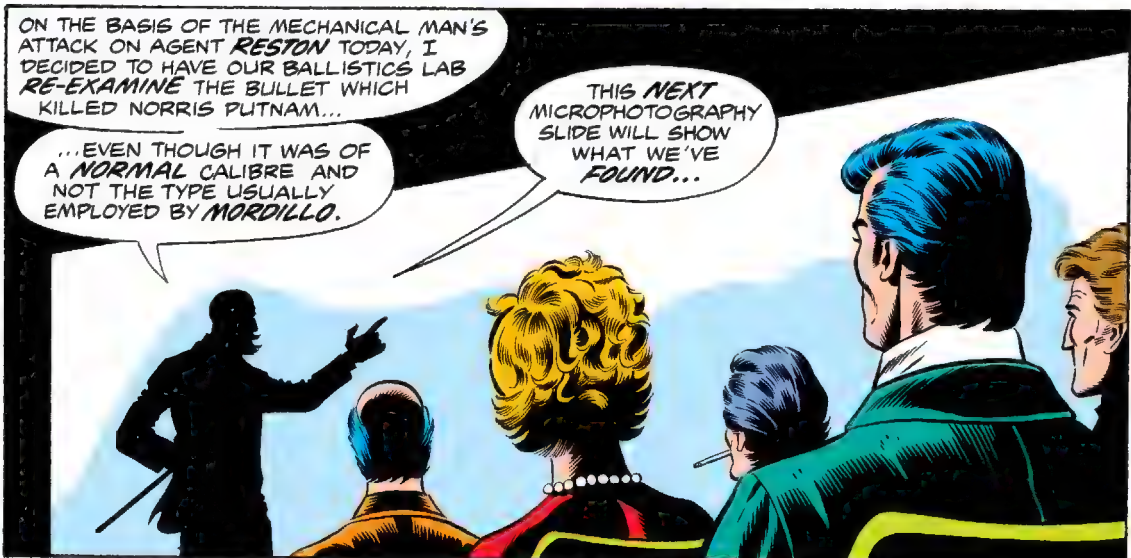
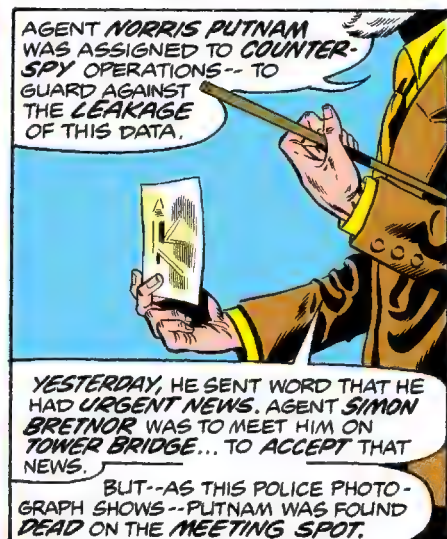
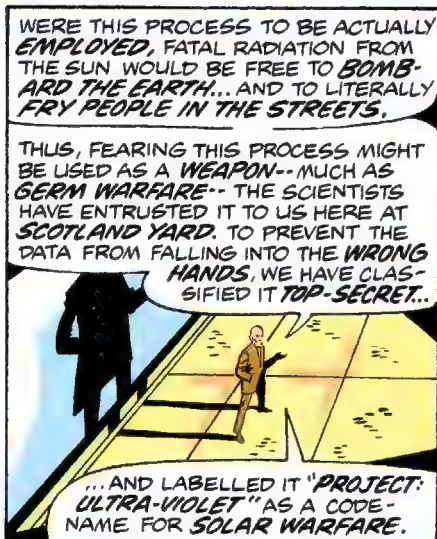
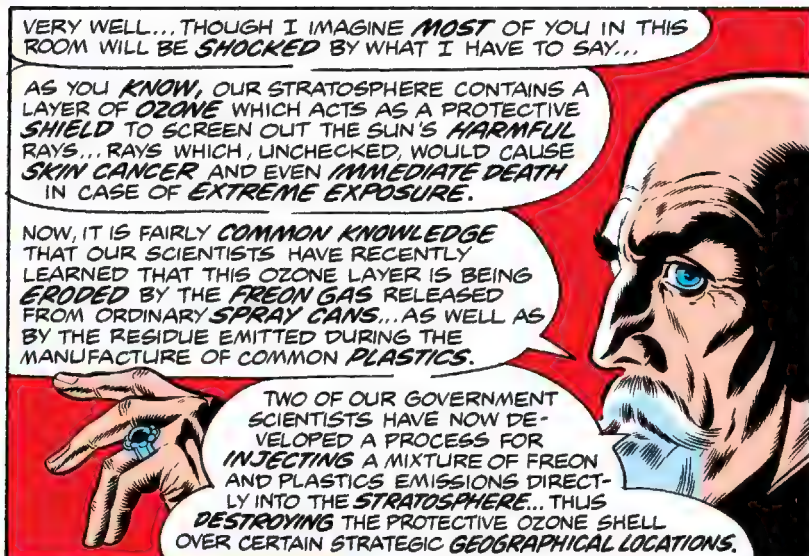


THE **PATTERN** WE MAY EXTRAPOLATE FROM ALL THIS IS **BLATANT**. MORDILLO'S FASCINATION WITH **MURDER**-- AND WITH THE CHILD'S GAME HE MAKES OF IT-- WOULD SUGGEST THAT HE IS LITTLE MORE THAN A HIGHLY PAID **HOMOCIDAL PSYCOPATH**...

...BUT, NEVERTHELESS, A **CHILLINGLY DANGEROUS OPPONENT**.

GRANTED. BUT THAT'S OLD HISTORY, **SMITH**.

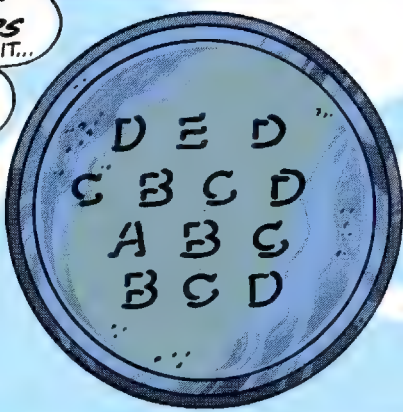
WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH THE NEW CASE **PETRIE** MENTIONED?



THESE LETTERS ARE OBVIOUSLY A **CODE** OF SOME SORT, OUR **CRYPTOGRAPHERS** ARE WORKING RIGHT NOW TO **DECIPHER** IT...

BUT EVEN STILL IN **CODE**, THE ENGRAVED MESSAGE ON THE BASE OF THIS BULLET TELLS US **ONE** THING FOR **CERTAIN**...

MORDILLO IS INVOLVED IN PLANS TO EMPLOY **PROJECT: ULTRA-VIOLET**.

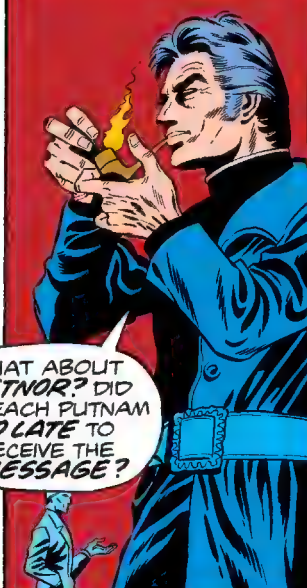


AND THAT'S WHERE WE **STAND**, GENTLEMEN...

...KNEE-DEEP IN A MYSTERY WHICH COULD SPELL THE **DAWN OF DOOMSDAY**.



WHAT ABOUT **BRETNOR**? DID HE REACH PUTNAM **TOO LATE** TO RECEIVE THE **MESSAGE**?



THAT, CLIVE IS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS NOW **FACING** US. WE DON'T **KNOW** IF BRETNOR RECEIVED THE MESSAGE.

HE'S BEEN **MISSING** EVER SINCE HE VOLUNTEERED TO MEET PUTNAM ON **TOWER BRIDGE**.



SIMON'S **MISSING**--?

"...FOR, HER CONCERN FOR THIS **SIMON BRETNOR** TRANS-CENDS MERE **CURIOSITY**."

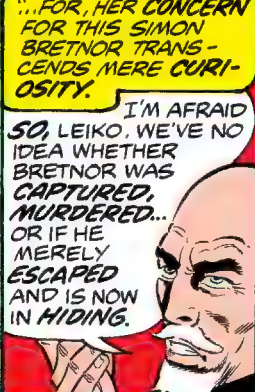
I'M AFRAID **SO**, LEIKO. WE'VE NO IDEA WHETHER BRETNOR WAS **CAPTURED, MURDERED...** OR IF HE MERELY **ESCAPED** AND IS NOW IN **HIDING**.

YES, THEY'RE DRAGGING THE **THAMES** UNDER THE BRIDGE NOW, IN THE HOPES THAT--

EH? WHAT'S **THIS**? HAVE YOU DECIPHERED THE **CODE**--?

WE CAN'T BE **CERTAIN**, SIR DENIS, BUT WE THINK THE LETTERS MIGHT REPRESENT **MUSICAL NOTES**...

"NOW IT IS **LEIKO'S** VOICE WHICH HIDES BEHIND HER **WORDS**..."


AS SUCH, THEY CORRESPOND WITH AN OLD **NURSERY RHYME TUNE...**

D LON-DON C BRIDGE D
E B C DOWN,
C A B C
IS A B C
FAL-LING DOWN,
B C D
FAL-LING DOWN

GOOD LORD, YES! THE **LONDON BRIDGE** DOESN'T EVEN **EXIST** ANYMORE-- BUT **MOST** PEOPLE CONFUSE IT WITH **TOWER BRIDGE**...

AND WHOEVER KILLED PUTNAM-- **MORDILLO**, FROM ALL INDICATIONS-- IS AFRAID THAT HE SECRETED A **CLUE** TO HIS INFORMATION SOMEWHERE ON THE BRIDGE BEFORE HE **DIED**. TYPICAL OF MORDILLO TO DESTROY A WHOLE BLOODY **BRIDGE** JUST TO DESTROY A **CLUE**...

AND THE BULLETS WITH "**MY FAIR LADY**" ON THEM-- THAT'S THE **CONCLUSION** OF THE SONG'S **VERSE**--! AND **LEIKO** IS **BRETNOR'S** FAIR LADY NOW, SO IF **HE'S** IN DANGER, **SHE** IS TOO!

DON'T KNOW WHY THE BULLETS WERE FIRED AT **ME**-- UNLESS IT'S BECAUSE I'VE SPENT A LOT OF **TIME** WITH **LEIKO** AND **MORDILLO'S** AFRAID SHE **TOLD** ME SOMETHING...

SAY... WHERE IS THE LITTLE BIRD ANYWAY...?

THINK SHE COULD'VE **SLIPPED OUT** WHILE WE WERE ALL GAWKIN' AT THIS **LONDON BRIDGE** BUSINESS--?

"THE **SCENT**... IS **VANISHING**..."

YOU CAN **BET** ON IT, **TARR**! **SLIPPED OUT** AND WENT STRAIGHT AFTER HER BELOVED **SIMON BRETNOR**!

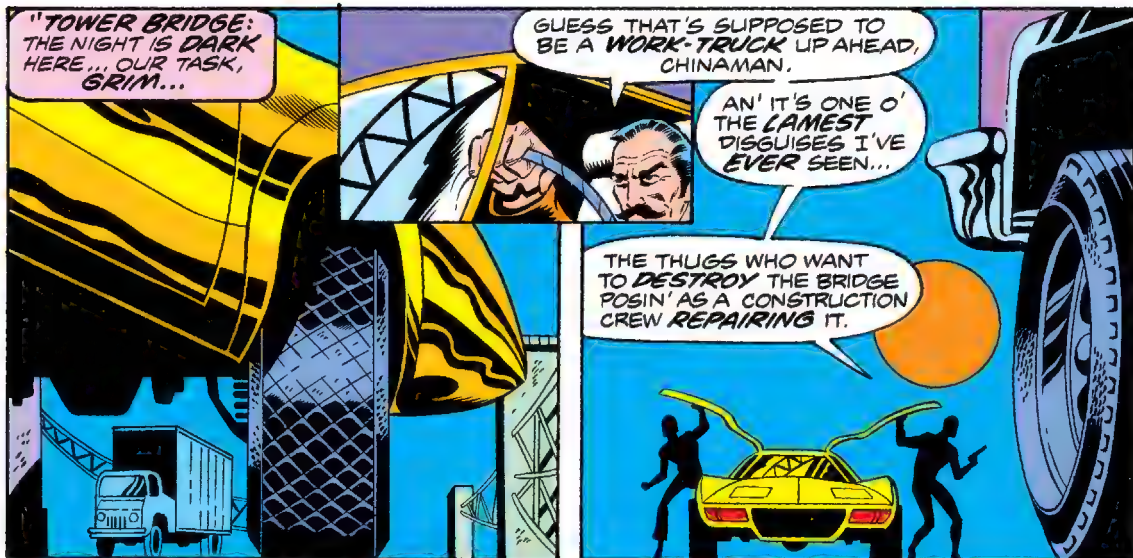
BUT I'M GONNA **FIND** HER BEFORE ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE **ROBOTS** DOES--!

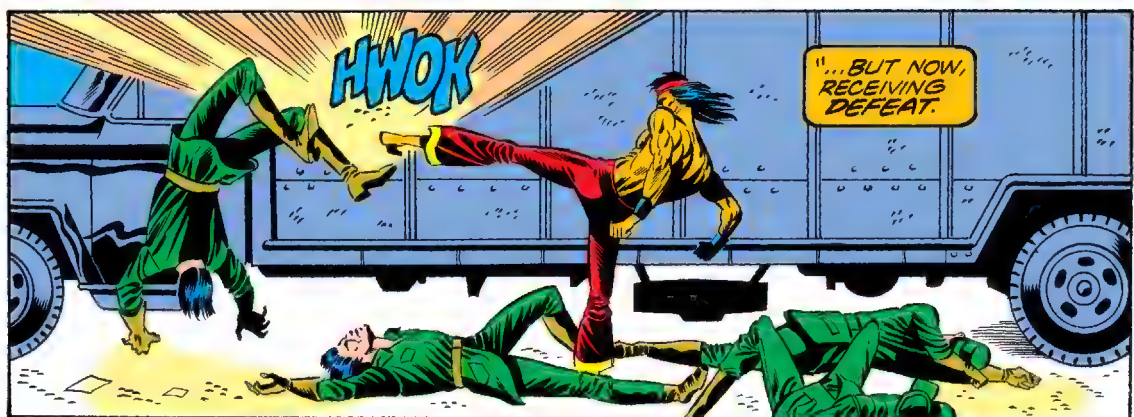
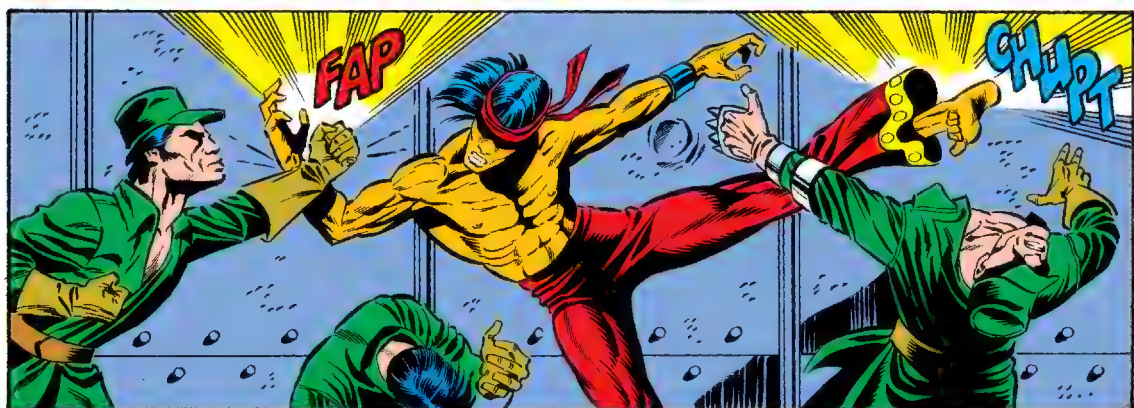
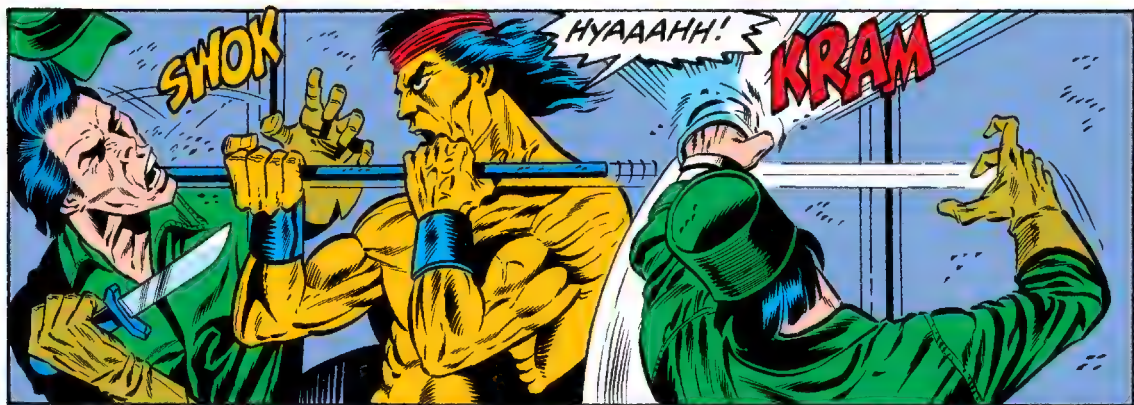
RESTON! CLIVE--! COME **BACK** HERE! YOU CAN'T GO AFTER MORDILLO BY **YOURSELF**, YOU **FOOL**--!

LET HIM GO, **SIR DENIS**...

HE'S RIGHT, YOU KNOW-- LITTLE **LEIKO** MIGHT BE IN A BIG FAT **PILE O'** DANGER, IF SHE **HAS** GONE AFTER **BRETNOR**. AND THE BOTH OF 'EM CAN **USE** **RESTON'S** HELP...

BESIDES, ME AN' THE **CHINA-MAN** CAN GET OVER TO **TOWER BRIDGE**. THE TWO OF US OUGHTA BE ENOUGH TO STOP IT FROM **FALLIN' DOWN**.

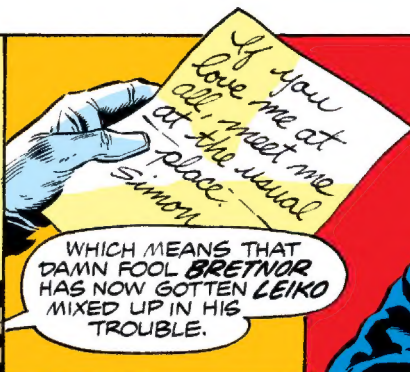






I'VE JUST BEEN TO **LEIKO'S FLAT**, SMITH, SHE WASN'T THERE, OF COURSE...

BUT I FOUND **THIS-- A NOTE...**



WHICH MEANS THAT DAMN FOOL **BRETNOR** HAS NOW GOTTEN **LEIKO** MIXED UP IN HIS TROUBLE.



AW, YER JUST **JEALOUS**, RESTON-- 'CAUSE **BRETNOR** STOLE HER AWAY FROM YOU.



THAT CUTS IT, TARR! IT'S ABOUT **TIME** YOU AND I--

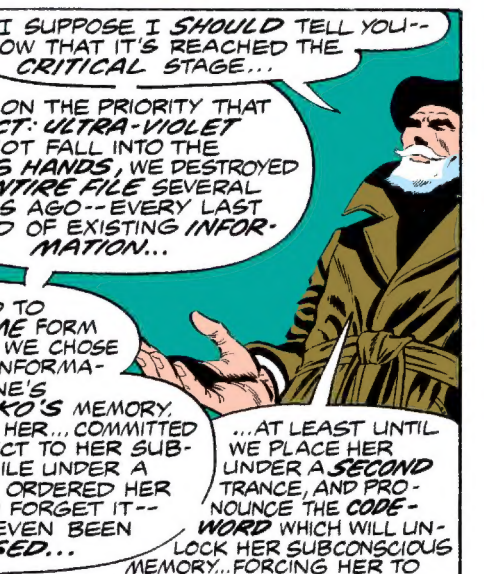


STOP IT, BOTH OF YOU! WITH **MORDILLO** ON THE PROWL, I DON'T NEED MY AGENTS KILLING EACH OTHER--!

BESIDES, CLIVE IS MORE ACCURATE THAN HE KNOWS.

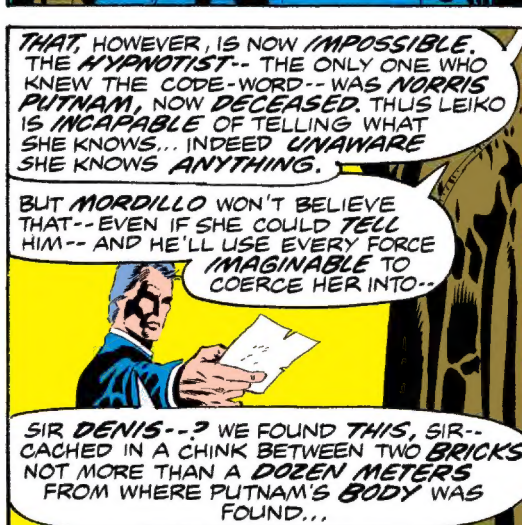


WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?



I SUPPOSE I SHOULD TELL YOU-- NOW THAT IT'S REACHED THE **CRITICAL STAGE...**

BASED ON THE PRIORITY THAT **PROJECT: ULTRA-VIOLET** MUST NOT FALL INTO THE **WRONG HANDS**, WE DESTROYED THE **ENTIRE FILE** SEVERAL MONTHS AGO-- EVERY LAST SHRED OF EXISTING **INFORMATION...**



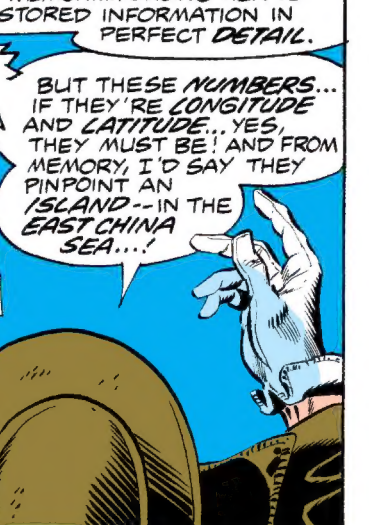
BUT WE HAD TO PRESERVE **SOME** FORM OF RECORD, SO WE CHOSE TO STORE THE INFORMATION IN SOMEONE'S **MEMORY... LEIKO'S MEMORY**. WE **HYPNOTISED** HER... COMMITTED THE ENTIRE PROJECT TO HER SUBCONSCIOUS MIND WHILE UNDER A **DEEP TRANCE...** THEN ORDERED HER **CONSCIOUS** MIND TO FORGET IT-- TO FORGET SHE'D EVEN BEEN **HYPNOTISED...**

...AT LEAST UNTIL WE PLACE HER UNDER A **SECOND TRANCE**, AND PRO-
NOUNCE THE **CODE-WORD** WHICH WILL UNLOCK HER SUBCONSCIOUS MEMORY... FORCING HER TO **RECITE** THE STORED INFORMATION IN PERFECT DETAIL.



GOOD LORD! THEN **LEIKO** HAS WALKED STRAIGHT INTO **MORDILLO'S TRAP--!**

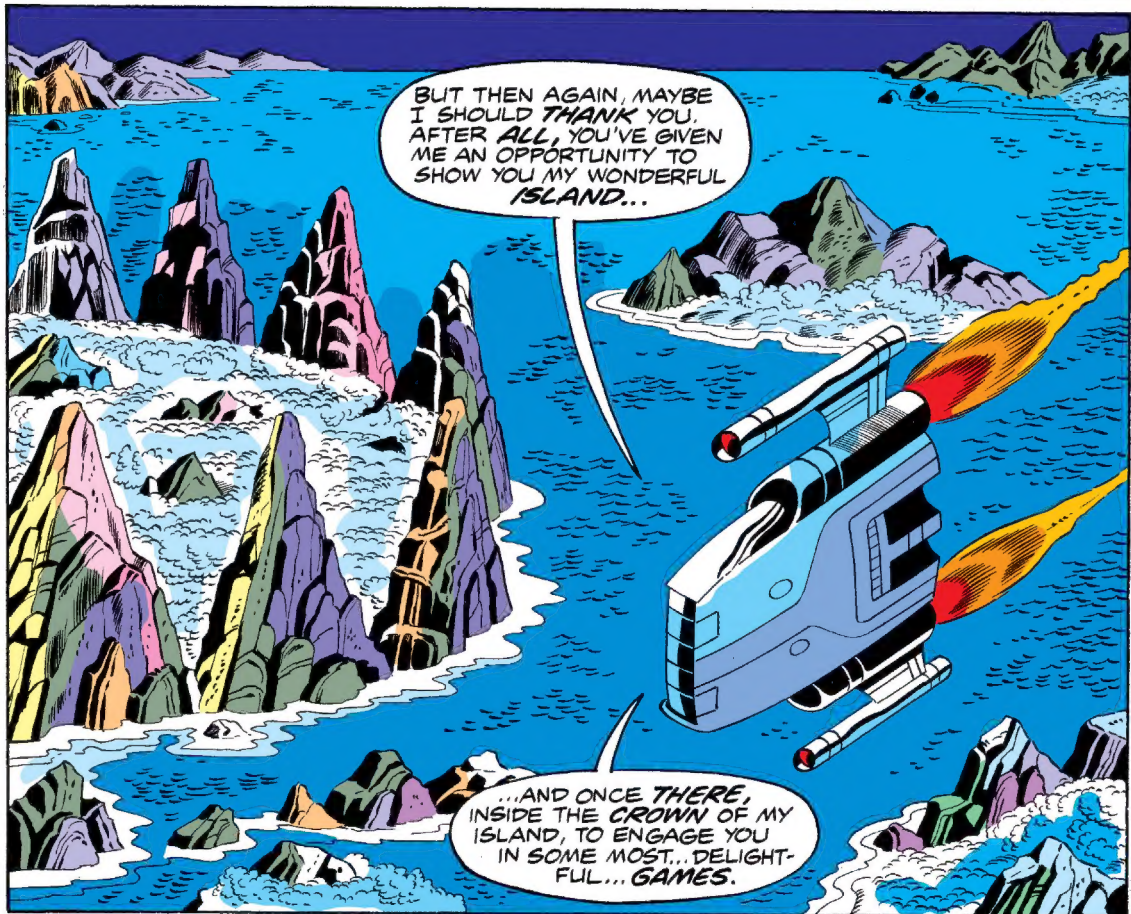
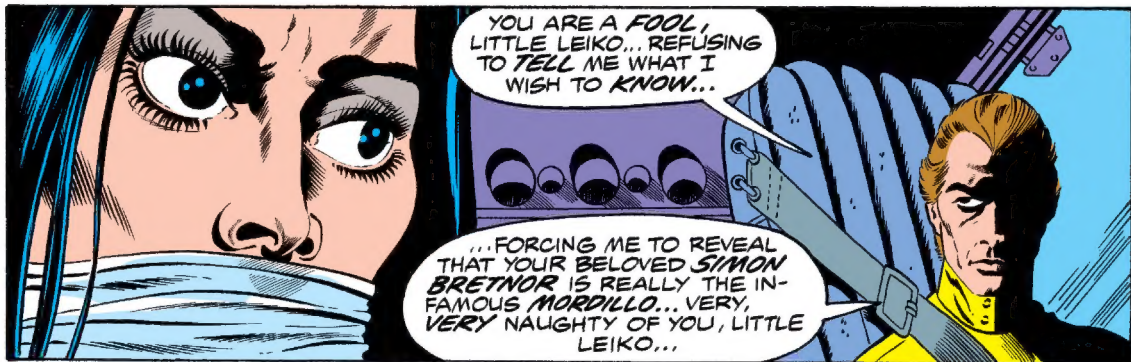
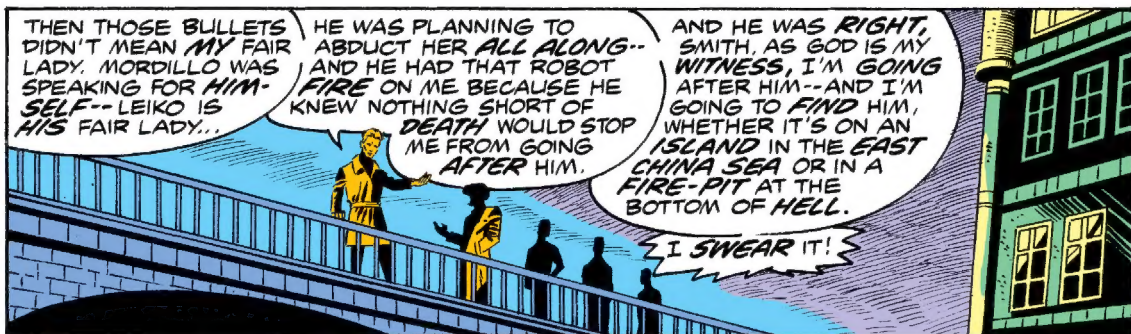
BRETNOR IS MORDILLO 129E 32N



BUT THESE **NUMBERS...** IF THEY'RE **LONGITUDE** AND **LATITUDE...** YES, THEY MUST BE! AND FROM MEMORY, I'D SAY THEY PINPOINT AN **ISLAND--** IN THE **EAST CHINA SEA...**!



SIR **DENIS--?** WE FOUND **THIS**, SIR-- CACHED IN A CHINK BETWEEN TWO **BRICKS**, NOT MORE THAN A **DOZEN METERS** FROM WHERE **PUTNAM'S BODY** WAS FOUND...



NEXT: THE WORD *OUTRÉ* WAS INVENTED FOR THIS ONE-- THE MOST BIZARRE, ACTION-PACKED DAZZLER YET!

CYCLONE AT THE CENTER OF A MADMAN'S CROWN

MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

A mixed bag of comments on various issues this time, as well as discussions on general topics ranging from skin-color to cigar origins. It begins here:

Dear Bullpen,

My eyes widen with excitement as the mailman deposits little bundles of joy in my mailbox. Joy races thru my body as I pull a copy of MASTER OF KUNG FU out of the package. My eagerness causes me to fumble the issue before I settle down and begin to read.

The title page is total disappointment. Disappointment is replaced by anger; this looks like another total disappointment. I remember the words of my father: "The man who craves only action, soon winds up in traction."

My anger grows as I turn the page. "Nothing but action," I mutter. I am a fool. Doug Moench and John Buscema have more talent than this. But as the plot grows, so does my interest. I become totally engrossed. The ending (beautifully drawn) leaves me exhausted but elated.

Joel Kok
8107 N. 41st Dr.
Phoenix, Ariz. 85021

Our eyes widen with excitement as the mailman deposits huge heaps of reaction into our mail bin. Anticipation races through our bodies as we dig a MISSIVE TO THE MASTER out of the mountain of mail. Our alacrity causes us to scrunch the envelope before we finally crack out the letter and read.

The first paragraph is total mystery. Mystery is replaced by the second paragraph — and anger; this looks like no more mystery. We remember the words of our marmoset: "He who craves only praise, winds up with hair all in grays."

Our anger grows as we reach the third paragraph. "Nothing but gripes," we mutter. We are persecuted. Joel Kok has more mercy than this. But as the paragraph grows, so does our hope. We become totally engrossed. The ending (beautifully written) leaves us aged but elated.

Dear Marvel,

Short and to the point:

MASTER OF KUNG FU is one of the best mags you people put out.

You've done a good job of capturing the atmosphere of the original Sax Rohmer books as far as I can tell. I've only read the first couple of those Fu Manchu epics; thanks to Marvel (of course) for turning me on to them.

Paul Gulacy is Shang-Chi. Those layouts and that art is fantastic. Please keep him on the strip permanently!

Lastly, when will Fu Manchu get his own series? If nothing else, give Peko the Marmoset his own mag. (Just kidding). You folks is all right by me. And that's Nuff Said.

Rick Koobs
Oberursel, Germany

And you is all right by us too, Rick. But why were you just kidding about Peko? If Howard the Duck (plug: by Steve Gerber and possibly Frank Brunner) can get his own mag...

As for Paul Gulacy, we agree with you on every count — and Paul will be around as often as his time permits. He and

Doug get a huge bang outta working together on the Shang-Chi strip and we in the bullpen think it shows. (And we'll let you in on a little secret here: Paul and Doug will soon begin work on a very special Elric series for one of Roy Thomas' black and white sword-and-sorcery mags. The tales will be adapted from Michael Moorcock's broodingly elegant stories about the albino swordsman-sorcerer from decadent Melnibone. And as if that isn't enough, Doug and Paul will be tackling *another* new project in the near future — we *told* you they enjoy working together — for a top-secret high-class epic-length new Marvel mag that'll knock you out of your trees and *then* some! Keep watching for further news, people; it's gonna be *worth* it.)

Dear Marvel,

Thanks to you (and the fearful Fu), we now know the source of the famous quote: "There's nothing like a Phan-si-gar!"

So revealed is another mystery of the accident...occident...uh, *Orient*!

Dave Lee
Box 692
Worthington, O. 4308

Right Dave. And say hello to Rufus T. Hackstabb, for us, huh?

Dear Doug, Paul, and Jack,

Forty pages of superb art by the magical hand of Paul Gulacy is something special indeed! GIANT-SIZE MASTER OF KUNG FU #2 was super-sensational, proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that Shang-Chi is the greatest kung fu character of all time. I just can't get over Paul's art. Too beautiful for words. And Jack Abel's inks were nice too.

Doug Moench has scripted some mighty fine stories during his stay at Marvel. "The Devil-Doctor's Triumph" was easily one of the very best yet. Fu Manchu was never more cunning and evil. Sandy's death, by Shang's own hand, was shocking beyond belief. The whole story really hit home, a fantastic effort from Marvel's House of Ideas.

In short, I loved it!!

Jack Frost
Route 3 Box 176-C
West Monroe, La. 71291

Thanks, Jack, Doug and Paul are especially pleased with that particular issue themselves, and now heartened by the incredibly enthusiastic response it elicited from the readers.

And for those of you who enjoy little glimpses behind the scenes, here's the story of GSMKF #2's inception: First, Doug was told that, due to a lack of kung fu material available for reprinting, he'd have to come up with forty pages of new story. His eyes immediately filled with stars of the majestic-glory variety — *forty* blockbusting pages in which to build a story...! It was too good to be true. But he knew that Paul Gulacy would be in town soon (and, in fact, staying at Doug's Manhattan apartment), so the Devil-May-Care lad started churning the creative juices through his mind, determined to come up with a story which fully

justified the unprecedented length. Paul arrived, shoed Doug's two cats (Punk and Booger) off the couch, and sat down just in time for a sumptuous feast prepared by Doug's girlfriend (and now brand-spanking-new letterer) Debra James. And then it began. Over dinner, Doug started relating his idea for the story, his voice growing more and more excited, coming up with new bits as he spoke, seeing angles he hadn't considered before, building characterizations, stretching the plot to its utmost limit, and in general getting turned on by his own ideas. Paul listened quietly to the whole thing and, when Doug was finished, said: "Whew," sipped some more wine, leaned back, petted Punk, and *thought*. At the end of "Pretzel Logic" by Steely Dan, Doug said: "Well?" Paul pulled himself back from the ozone long enough to reply: "Sounds pretty good. Write up the plot and I'll see if I can't do something nice with it."

Doug wrote up the plot several days later. Sent it to Paul. And Paul did something nice with it.

Incredibly nice.

Dear Doug, Paul, Jack, and Co.:

No real big review; I'm too flabbergasted. GSMOKF #2 was the best color comic of 1974. You have my vote in the awards.

No one could've done it better, and if this is any hint of the kind of quality to come...

HOO BOY! Make Mine the Master—!

Avery J. Cohen
1128 Kenton Rd.
Deerfield, IL 60015

People—

MASTER OF KUNG FU is your most consistently well-written and drawn comic series, and the GIANT-SIZE MOKF is twice as great.

Paul Gulacy's art is obviously influenced by Steranko, but he seems to be slowly developing his own style (and look what happened when Barry Smith broke out of his "Kirbyesque" style!). If I were to list each panel I enjoyed more than the usual comic book art I see, this letter would be four pages long. The two pages that hit me the most, however, are pages 45 (whose idea was it to lay out the page in that form?) and 48. Beautiful. Simply breathtaking.

And Doug Moench must have knocked himself out on the writing chores for this issue. It's good to see that Shang-Chi is not totally frigid toward the fair sex. Sandy was an interesting character...I was sorry to see her killed off. Perhaps in the future, Shang-Chi will develop a more permanent romance...?

Congratulations on an all-around fine issue and best of luck for continued success in the future. Peace.

Craig Peters
40 Yale Street
Garden City, N.Y. 11350

A more permanent romance, eh Craig? Have you seen *Leiko*? We can't tip our hats just yet, but Shang-Chi has already evinced *some* interest in our new character...and who *knows*?

The concept for page 45 — the "maze-page" — was one of Devil-May-Care Doug's wild-eyed schemes. When he described it to Paul over that same aforementioned feast in the ozone, the Grandiose Mr. Gulacy wasn't quite sure he'd be able to pull it off. He was, of course, quite mistaken.

As for a Steranko influence...well, yes, both Paul and

Doug freely admit a deep respect for Steranko's often innovative work. In fact, when Doug first started working with Paul, he plotted the Shang-Chi stories in the "Steranko-style." Of course, he now thinks of Shang-Chi in the "Gulacy-style" — and as you do, Craig, feels that Paul has fully molded his own highly individualistic ambience of mood and dynamics.

Dear Bullpen,

I have a question dealing with responsibility. As the company which puts all its credits on the printed page, perhaps you would explain some of the decision-making involved. Am I leading up to a pointed question? Oh, yes, and here it is: Which of the illustrious names on your title page determined that Shadow-Stalker would be the same hue as an overripe banana? Naturally, this question is important to me or I wouldn't have written. But beyond that, I suspect that many readers would like to know more about the development of such details in a general sense. How about it?

Bill Wu
316 E. Madison #15
Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104

Bill, it's gonna sound like a cop-out, but at this stage we honestly don't *know* who originally decided on Shadow-Stalker's color. We *do* know who colored Shadow-Stalker's second appearance, but he was merely attempting to maintain consistency with the character's *first* appearance.

As Doug has discussed with you in private correspondence, Bill, the coloring in comics is a sticky issue, particularly when it involves something as sensitive as differentiating one ethnic group or race from another. By the very nature of the printing process used for comic books, we're severely limited in the area of subtle gradations. Comics are geared toward bright, splashy, primary colors — with some (but not enough) varying shades afforded by certain combinations of the four basic color plates. For example, we can reproduce the bright yellow used on Shadow-Stalker; or the more "faded-out" yellow used on Fu Manchu; and the "orange-yellow" used on Shang-Chi himself. Those are our choices. And faced with those limited choices, Doug has questioned why we must resort to *any* shade of yellow for our Asian characters. After all, the *actual* skin color of Asians is much closer to the shade used to portray *Caucasians* in comics. The answer he got from the editors is that we *don't* have to resort to yellow. Thus, it was decided that with the exception of firmly established characters (Shang-Chi and Fu Manchu being obvious examples), all future Asian characters would be colored in the same flesh tones as are Caucasian characters. And then Shadow-Stalker happened, how and why we don't know. But we're pretty certain the situation has now been corrected. If it hasn't been, and it sometimes takes a while to learn these things, we'll see that it is.

And we're sincerely sorry, Bill, if you or any other readers have been offended by anything appearing in MASTER OF KUNG FU or any other Marvel book. Our goal is the same as yours: To bridge the gap...not widen it.

NEXT ISSUE: The whackiest and most action-packed epic wrapped into a bizarre plot you've ever seen. Mordillo's fantastic island! The Pufferbelly Express chugging toward a martial arts duel with the March of the Wooden Soldiers! The inimitable roly-poly robot called Brynocki! Solar Warfare! And much more in: CYCLONE AT THE CENTER OF A MADMAN'S CROWN! Be here.